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ABSTRACT

In its first extension year following a 3-year funding cycle, Project GET SET served 108 Bronx junior high school students with limited ability in both English and Spanish, in two schools located in economically depressed, predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods. The project's major goals were to develop both English and Spanish language skills and provide counseling services and career information. Analysis of student achievement data and an examination of project records indicate that: (1) the English language development objective could not be assessed as proposed because of reporting problems; (2) the native language arts objective was surpassed; (3) the career awareness objective was surpassed; (4) the two parental involvement objectives, a proposed number of parent contacts, and a proposed number of workshops, were met; (5) attendance rates surpassed schoolwide rates at both sites, surpassing the objective; and (6) the proposed objectives for providing counseling and tutoring were not met because they were unrealistic for the level of staffing funded.(MSE)

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O.E.A. Evaluation Section Report

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Grant Number: G00-830-2142

PROJECT GET SET

1986-1987

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A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

In its first extension year following a three-year Title VII funding cycle, Project GET SET served 108 Bronx junior high school students of limited ability in both English and Spanish. The students attended J.H.S. 80 and J.H.S. 143, both located in economically depressed, predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods in which there was great need for the special services the project provided.

GET SET's major goals were to develop both English- and Spanish-language skills and to provide counseling services and career information.

The project was administered by the Office of Bilingual Education (O.B.E.) of the New York City public schools. According to the project proposal, the GET SET staff was to have consisted of a project director, two resource specialists, a project secretary, and 15 student tutors. But, because of reduced funding, GET SET's two sites were served by one resource specialist and one student aide, plus the project director.

Project objectives were assessed in English language development (the Degrees of Reading Power Test [D.R.P.]); ability in the native language (project-developed test); career awareness (project-developed test); and parental involvement, staff development, guidance, attendance, field trips, and tutoring (project records). Quantitative analysis of student achievement data and an examination of project records indicate that:

- The objective in English language development could not be assessed as proposed since D.R.P. scores were provided for only 55 percent of the project's students instead of the proposed 75 percent. Of the students for whom data were provided, seventh and eighth graders made small gains on the D.R.P., but these gains were not statistically significant.

- Seventy-five percent of the seventh- and eighth-grade students and 92 percent of the ninth-grade students made gains on a test of native language arts, thus surpassing the project objective in this area.

- Eighty-six percent of the seventh- and ninth-grade students and 77 percent of the eighth-grade students made gains on a test of career awareness, thus surpassing the proposed objective in this area.

- The two parental involvement objectives were met: staff members made the proposed number of parent contacts, and the proposed number of workshops were held. Staff development objectives were also met.

- The attendance rates of project students surpassed the

school-wide attendance rates at both sites, thus meeting the proposed objective.

- The proposed objectives for providing counseling and tutoring were not met because they were unrealistic for the staff as funded.

The following recommendation is offered to improve the project:

- Revise performance objectives that are unrealistic or outside the scope of the project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of this report, as of all Office of Educational Assessment Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit reports, is the result of a cooperative effort of regular staff and consultants. In addition to those whose names appear on the cover, Arthur Lopatin has edited the manuscripts. Margaret Scorza has reviewed and corrected reports, and has coordinated the editing and production process. Martin Kohli has spent many hours, creating, correcting, and maintaining data files. Maria Grazia Asselle, Rosalyn Alvarez, Donna Plotkin, and Milton Vickerman have interpreted student achievement and integrated their findings into reports. Finally, Betty Morales has worked intensively to produce, duplicate, and disseminate the completed documents. Without their able and faithful participation, the unit could not have handled such a large volume of work and still have produced quality evaluation reports.

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PROJECT GET SET

Central Office:	Office of Bilingual Education 131 Livingston Street Brooklyn, New York 11201
Participating Sites:	J.H.S. 80/J.H.S.143 (C.S.D. 10) Walton High School
Year of Operation:	1986-1987, First Extension Year
Target Population:	108 Spanish-speaking students
Project Director(s):	Fall: Henriot Zephirin, Jr. Spring: Ana Amaez

I. INTRODUCTION

By providing supportive and peer-tutorial services on a pull-out basis to dually-limited* Hispanic junior high school students Project GET SET sought to:

-- reinforce English language skills, especially reading and writing;

-- reinforce native language skills;

-- offer personal counseling services; and

-- offer career guidance.

When it began operating in the fall of 1983, funding for the project was less than requested and late in arriving. This contributed to the fact that the project director was not hired until January 1984 and the resource specialist positions could not be filled until December 1984 -- well into the project's second year of operation. Activities during the project's second year (1984-85) included parent notification, outreach to non-

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*Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and even lower on the Spanish version.

project personnel, curriculum development, the hiring of 15 student tutors, student selection, and the commencement of classes. GET SET's two sites were fully operational by February 1985, when they started to serve a total of 100 students.

During its third year (1985-86), an additional budget cut made it necessary to eliminate one resource specialist and to sharply reduce the number of student tutors.

During the fall of 1987, one of the two remaining student aides resigned and was not replaced. This left only one resource specialist and one student aide for 108 students at two sites (J.H.S. 80 and J.H.S. 143.)

In spite of the scarcity of resources, GET SET's staff provided direct services to students and worked with mainstream staff members to ensure that the teachers integrated GET SET materials, such as those in interviewing skills, into their regular curricula.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM STAFFING

GET SET's staff consisted of a project director (who also directed another O.B.E.-administered project), a resource specialist, and a part-time student tutor. Working under the supervision of the director of O.B.E., the project director provided the resource specialist and student tutor with guidance and practical support, reviewed assessment instruments, furnished evaluation information, attended meetings and conferences on project management and bilingual education, identified and contacted outside speakers, reviewed and located new curricula and materials, edited the project's newsletter, and worked as liaison between the project and community members.

The resource specialist spent two days a week at one site and three days a week at the other. She provided participating students with supplementary instruction in English and career skills, coordinated project activities and resources with the director, helped with administrative tasks and program implementation, and instructed teachers in the use of project-supplied curricula and curricular aids. Because GET SET will be phased out in the not-too-distant future and teacher training is vital if the project is to have a lasting impact, she devoted as much time as possible to it.

A Ph.D. candidate in education at New York University, the resource specialist had many years of experience as a community worker and career/guidance counselor for minorities, especially

PROJECT GET SET

1986-1987

OEA Evaluation Report

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Hispanic women. She had been a bilingual teacher for six years, and had worked as an administrator of bilingual day care centers.

A Walton High School student was hired to provide individualized tutoring in English reading, Spanish, and career skills to project students at both sites. She also assisted the resource specialist with tasks like setting up audiovisual equipment and maintaining files. Because of the help provided by the student tutor, the resource specialist was able to devote most of her time to instructional planning and career guidance. According to the resource specialist, the tutor was an excellent role model because she was the first in her family to finish high school and was applying to become a police officer after she graduated.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Both sites were located in economically depressed parts of District 10 in the Bronx, and thus were eligible for E.C.I.A. Chapter I funding. Approximately 65 percent of the students at J.H.S. 80 and 72 percent at J.H.S. 143 were eligible for the free-lunch program. Approximately 54 percent of the student population at J.H.S. 80 and 62 percent at J.H.S. 143 was Hispanic. Although J.H.S. 143 was in better physical condition than J.H.S. 80, both were overcrowded. The project had to store its materials and conduct enrichment classes in each school's library. The din of other library activities was the worst defect of this arrangement.

At J.H.S. 80, GET SET occupied a corner of the school

library. Although cramped, the space accommodated a table for eight to ten students, file cabinets, and shelves containing books and other Spanish-language materials. The walls were decorated with student-produced artwork on bilingual education, particularly Project GET SET.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The resource specialist, aided by the student tutor, worked with groups of five to 15 students to develop their language skills while exposing them to career-oriented issues. The enrichment classes included such activities as preparing resumes, completing worksheets, reading project-supplied career-related materials, and viewing career-related filmstrips. Students also heard guest lecturers discuss various career opportunities and went on career-related field trips.

The resource specialist also provided career and personal counseling on a one-to-one basis. Because the school counselor was not Spanish-speaking, the students reportedly confided in the resource specialist more easily than in the school counselor. They also were reported to be more comfortable in the informal atmosphere of the GET SET center than in other, more formal school settings. Both the resource specialist and the project director felt that GET SET's success in establishing personal rapport with project students had played an important role in keeping their truancy rates down. However, they regretted that there were not enough staff members to follow up on chronic absentees.

III. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The major tool for selecting students for the program was the Language Assessment Battery (LAB). This test was developed by the New York City Board of Education and has been accepted by the United States Office of Civil Rights as part of New York City's plan to satisfy federal regulations relating to the Lau vs. Nichols (1974) Supreme Court decision and the Aspira Consent Decree (1974). The LAB measures all four English language skills: listening/understanding, speaking, reading, and writing.

Under the terms of the Aspira Consent Decree, Hispanic students who score at or below the twentieth percentile on the English version of the LAB and score at a higher percentile on the Spanish version are considered to be of limited English proficiency (LEP) and are entitled to a bilingual instructional program. However, some LEP students score even lower on the Spanish version of the LAB. These students, who are weak in both native- and English-language skills, comprised GET SET's target population.

In 1986-87, GET SET served 108 students in grades seven through nine. Fifty-one students were from J.H.S. 80, and 57 were from J.H.S. 143. Fifty-one percent of the students were in the seventh grade; 33 percent were in the eighth grade; and 16 percent were in the ninth grade. Females outnumbered males, 54 to 43 percent. (See Table 1.)

Twenty-seven percent of the students were born in the Dominican Republic, and 21 percent were born in Puerto Rico. The

TABLE 1

Distribution of GET SET Students by Grade and School

Grade	J.H.S. 80	J.H.S. 143	Total	Percent
7	25	28	53	51
8	9	25	34	33
9	12	4	16	16
TOTAL	46*	57	103	
PERCENT OF TOTAL	45	55	100	

*Data on grade level were missing for five students from J.H.S. 80.

- About half of all students were seventh graders.
- Most students at J.H.S. 80 were in seventh grade, whereas most students at J.H.S. 143 were in seventh and eighth grades.
- Both schools had relatively few ninth graders receiving services.

remaining 52 percent were born in other Central and South American countries. (See Table 2.)

According to the resource specialist, the overwhelming majority of project students came from family backgrounds characterized by low literacy levels (in both Spanish and English), poverty, and often emotional problems. Most students, she said, came from broken homes, and therefore many of the mothers had to work. This situation, coupled with low incomes, often led to emotional stress for parents and children. Although none of the GET SET students were considered "learning disabled," their educational deficits and difficult family circumstances put them at severe risk of failing academically and dropping out of school. They are, as a group, among those most vulnerable students in the New York City public school system.

TABLE 2

Number and Percent of Project Students
by Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Dominican Republic	27	27
Puerto Rico	21	21
Honduras	4	4
Guatemala	3	3
Cuba	2	2
Costa Rica	1	1
Nicaragua	1	1
Central and South American Country Unspecified	40	40
TOTAL	99*	99**

*Data were missing for eight students.

**Numbers do not sum to 100 because of rounding.

- Most participants were born in Central and South America.

IV. FINDINGS

The evaluation findings for the 1986-87 academic year include objectives measurable by standardized tests and those assessable by an examination of program materials and records, site visits, and interviews with school and program personnel. In the following section, findings are presented by the instructional and non-instructional objectives proposed to and accepted by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

-- By June, 70 percent of the students in the bilingual enrichment classes will demonstrate English reading achievement that is significantly greater than that of similar non-program students.

Students were pretested and posttested on the Degrees of Reading Power Test* (D.R.P.). In order to assess achievement, raw scores were converted to normal curve equivalent (N.C.E.) scores. N.C.E.s are normalized standard scores which have the advantage of forming an equal interval scale so that scores and gains can be averaged. For the norming population, N.C.E.s have a mean of 50, a standard deviation of approximately 20, and a

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*The Degrees of Reading Power Test was developed by the College Board to provide information about student reading ability on the same scale used to describe the difficulty of textbooks. The Kuder-Richardson reliability estimates are above .94, and various studies have demonstrated the validity of the test. It has convergent validity correlation coefficients with the California Achievement Test ranging from .77 to .85, and it was found to have a predictive validity correlation coefficient of .89 with the Word Completion Test.

range from one to 99. Thus, although no comparison group data were available, scores can be compared to the norming population, and an N.C.E. gain, no matter how small, indicates improvement.

Correlated *t*-tests on pretest and posttest N.C.E. scores for each grade level were computed to determine if the changes in scores were statistically significant (see Table 3). Data were complete for only 59 students -- 55 percent of the target group. Students in grade seven gained an average of 1.5 N.C.E. points; eighth graders gained an average of 1.6 N.C.E.s. Without being statistically significant, these gains do indicate an improvement in English reading. The sample of ninth graders was so small (n=4) that their decrease by an average of 2.5 N.C.E.s was not statistically significant and may not be educationally meaningful.

Since data were unavailable for similar non-program students as well as 70 percent of the students in the bilingual enrichment classes, the objective cannot be assessed as proposed. However, the data available do indicate a small improvement in English reading.

TABLE 3

English Achievement

Significance of Mean N.C.E. Score Differences Between Initial and Final Test Scores of Students on the Degrees of Reading Power Test, by Grade

Grade	N	Pretest		Posttest		Mean Difference	Mean S.D.
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
7	32	39.6	12.1	41.1	12.2	1.5	8.4
8	23	43.2	14.4	44.8	12.8	1.6	7.5
9	4	46.8	7.3	44.3	11.1	-2.5	7.2

- Seventh and eighth graders made small N.C.E. gains which were not statistically significant.
- The losses made by ninth graders were not statistically significant.
- Complete data were reported for only half of the target group.

NATIVE LANGUAGE ARTS

-- By June, 70 percent of the participating students will have demonstrated improvement in Spanish language arts skills as measured by a pre-post administration of a program-developed test.

The text used for Spanish-language instruction was Campanitas de Cristal, which emphasizes the development of writing skills and focuses on immigration-related themes.

Tutoring was done in conjunction with the development of career awareness, and it stressed the marketability of bilingual skills.

Students' performance records were kept in the form of individual progress reports.The program staff was also in the process of translating and adapting a test, Job Awareness Inventory, Form B to measure student achievement in both career awareness and Spanish-language skills. However, because of budget and personnel limitations, the test will not be available until 1987-88.

Achievement in Native Language Arts

Students' pretest and posttest scores on a program-developed test of native language arts were available for review. Of the 36 seventh-grade students who had both pretest and posttest scores, 25 (75 percent) made gains in native language arts. Similarly, 15 of the 20 eighth graders (75 percent) who had complete data made gains. While only 13 ninth graders provided complete data, 12 (92 percent) made gains. Although the proportion of missing data was high (37 percent), the proposed

objective appears to have been achieved and surpassed at all grade levels.

CAREER-RELATED INSTRUCTION

-- By June, at least 70 percent of participating students will improve their knowledge of careers by passing teacher-made tests.

According to staff members most project students were unaware of the full range of career opportunities available to them and lacked knowledge of the educational requirements for various jobs. Consequently, developing career awareness was one of GET SET's most important goals.

Most of the reference books and other reading materials at the enrichment center were career-related. Spanish translations of the U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Outlook Handbook and Directory of Occupational Titles were available for students' use. In addition, the resource specialist was developing bilingual curricula on a wide range of careers.

The project also maintained an excellent collection of employment-related films in both English and Spanish. (It was said to be the most comprehensive career-oriented series in the district.) In cooperation with school authorities, GET SET sponsored regular screenings of these films at both sites. According to the resource specialist, approximately 20 films were shown each month at J.H.S. 80 -- to parents, teachers, and members of the school's dropout-prevention program as well as GET SET students.

Other employment-oriented activities included participation

in citywide contests, presentations by guest lecturers, and trips to job-related sites. A GET SET student won first prize in an art contest celebrating National Women's History Month sponsored by District 10 and the Office of the Bronx Borough President. Her poster was entitled "Hispanic Women Breaking Barriers." Among the guest lecturers were several Hispanics chosen because of their ability to serve as role models, for example, the first Hispanic woman to head a construction company, and a lead dancer from Ballet Hispanico. Field trips included visits to banks, hospitals, and other centers where advanced technology was in use.

A member of the evaluation team observed a GET SET enrichment class at J.H.S. 80. The students had identified several "non-traditional" occupations and some of them were busy clipping pictures to illustrate each occupation from magazines. Students who had already completed this part of the assignment were writing short English-language essays on each job. All the students participated enthusiastically and frequently asked the resource specialist for help.

Improvement in Career Awareness

Gains, rather than passing rates, on a teacher-made test of career awareness were computed to assess the objective in this area because a passing criterion had not been established. Data indicate the above-mentioned activities succeeded in improving students' career-related knowledge: 50 seventh graders (86 percent), 31 eighth graders (77 percent), and 14 ninth graders

(86 percent) made gains on this test. Thus, the proposed objective was achieved.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

-- Parents of participating students will be contacted by telephone, mail, or visited by family assistants at least twice each semester regarding the progress of their children. This is in addition to report cards issued three times a year.

The resource specialist contacted parents by phone and mail at least twice per semester and held at least three parental meetings per semester. Thus the proposed objectives in this area were met.

The resource specialist's meetings were coordinated with schoolwide parental meetings, and telephone and mail contacts were made with the assistance of the school principals at each site. An invitation to attend the spring parent-teacher conference at J.H.S. 80 was translated into Spanish by the resource specialist.

-- At least five workshops on guidance-related themes, such as understanding adolescent behavior, requirements for promotion, instruments used to assess bilingual students' career opportunities and the types of high schools offering courses that students are interested in pursuing, will be held for parents of participating students.

The proposed objective in this area was met: the project held parent-teacher conferences on guidance-related themes and workshops on guidance-, job-, and school-related themes at least once a month. The attendance rate at these sessions was reported to have been between 40 and 50 percent.

According to the project director and resource specialist,

parents were often unaware of the role and purpose of bilingual education. Once they had been informed about the purpose of bilingual education, parents' level of concern increased and they participated in school meetings and workshops more frequently. Parents were also routinely invited to join the program's field trips. However, the response in this area was low because most parents worked during school hours.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

-- Staff members will participate in at least five workshops on methods of integrating career education into the curriculum.

-- By June, 70 percent of the high school student aides will participate in at least 16 training sessions on tutoring techniques used with program participants.

Staff members attended at least five workshops per academic year, thus achieving the first program objective in this area. In the spring, the project director attended meetings and conferences on project management and a Title VII evaluation workshop sponsored by the Bilingual Unit of the Office of Educational Assessment. According to program records, the resource specialist attended the following workshops: "Development of Spanish Language Curriculum," sponsored by Georgetown University and the Office of Bilingual Education; "English as a Second Language through the Computer," sponsored by the Janus Publishing Company; and "How to Integrate Career Education with Computer Use," sponsored by I.B.M. In the fall, she attended "Strategies for Improving First and Second Language for Students K-9" (six sessions), sponsored by the Office of

Bilingual Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Community School District 10.

The project's single student tutor attended 16 sessions on tutoring techniques conducted by the resource specialist. Thus, the second objective in this area was achieved.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

-- By June, 70 percent of the program students will meet at least once a week with the guidance counselor to discuss academic progress and personal issues.

According to project records for 101 students, 98 (97 percent) met with the school guidance counselor an average of five times. Thus, the program did not meet its objective in this area.

However, academic and personal counseling were also provided by the GET SET resource specialist on a weekly basis. The resource specialist reported that most program students came from broken homes, had serious family problems, and needed strong guidance and counseling to remain in school. Because the mainstream counselors were not bilingual, most program students relied on the resource specialist for advice and emotional support. At the same time, the project director and resource specialist both noted that following-up on troubled students had become very difficult because there were so many other demands on the resource specialist's time. Several students were interviewed by a member of the evaluation team. All said they had learned a great deal about careers, felt comfortable with the resource specialist and student tutor, and looked forward to

visiting the enrichment center.

ATTENDANCE

-- As a result of participating in the program, the attendance of program participants will surpass that of the school as a whole during 1986-87.

The attendance of program students was very high at both schools. GET SET students at J.H.S. 80 had an average attendance rate of 90 percent, surpassing the school rate (80 percent) by 10 percentage points. Program students at J.H.S. 143 also had a 90 percent attendance rate, surpassing the school attendance rate (84 percent) by 6 percentage points. Clearly, the objective in this area was achieved.

CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

-- By June, bilingual learning activity units consisting of lessons, enrichment activities, and evaluations related to career awareness and exploration will be developed for each grade.

According to the project director, this objective was eliminated from the proposal, because of budget limitations. However, curricula for Spanish language arts and for career orientation were being developed by the resource specialist. In addition, bilingual learning-activity units were developed and supplied to the program. These units consisted of newspaper and magazine articles on jobs and lists of available community agencies and individuals who might be sources of employment.

FIELD TRIPS

-- By June, participating students will attend at least six field trips to representative places of work to aid in the development of their career interests.

According to project staff, six field trips were offered to develop students' career interests. The resource specialist noted that these outings also increased the students' awareness of job opportunities within their own community. Trips included visits to: El Banco de Ponce, an I.B.M. installation, the telephone company, the Forty-Second Street Library, and community institutions such as Montefiore Hospital. However, data provided for 103 students indicate that 85 (79 percent) attended only four trips. The rest of the students attended three or fewer trips. Thus, the proposed objective in this area was not met.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Although the project did not propose an objective in this area, it sponsored a multi-cultural festival at J.H.S. 143, and published a newsletter illustrating its achievements.

TUTORIAL SESSIONS

-- By June, 70 percent of the program students will have attended at least 90 tutorial sessions provided by high school student aides.

Data in this area were provided for 102 students. The number of tutoring sessions ranged from three to 38 per student (for an average of 26 tutorials throughout the academic year). This fell far short of the proposed 90-session minimum. However,

in view of the project's radically diminished complement of student tutors, the number of sessions appears to be realistic. (See recommendations.)

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Despite repeated budget cuts, Project GET SET appeared successful in providing most of the services it had proposed, at a level commensurate with the availability of staff. This was largely due to the dedication and commitment of the resource specialist, as well as to the cooperation of the principals at both sites.

Operating out of enrichment centers located in small corners of the schools' libraries, the project staff provided tutoring in English-language skills and native language arts, offered career guidance, adapted materials to meet students' academic and linguistic needs, contacted students' parents by mail and phone, and provided training to its student tutors. Through a program of extracurricular trips and guest lectures, the staff attempted to foster students' self-confidence and cultural awareness, and to convey the necessity of a high school diploma in the contemporary job market.

The attempt to integrate the project's career and guidance material with the mainstream curriculum continued throughout the year and received the enthusiastic support of the administration of both schools.

A review of student performance data revealed that the project achieved its instructional objectives in the areas of native language arts and career awareness. Although the objective for English-language achievement was not met as

proposed, seventh- and eighth-grade students made small gains on the D.R.P.; however, they were not statistically significant.

The project achieved its non-instructional objectives in the areas of attendance, parental involvement, and staff development.

It should be pointed out that the project's failure to meet its tutoring and guidance objectives was due to circumstances beyond its control, namely, a sharp cut in the number of tutors available to students and the fact that student visits to the guidance counselor were arranged by the school, not the project.

The newly-appointed project director was committed to making frequent visits to the sites, and was actively involved in all aspects of the program. The acting principal at J.H.S. 80 indicated that he was making every effort to keep the resource specialist beyond the project's duration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation is offered for possible program improvement:

The project should consider revising its objectives regarding tutorial and guidance sessions. To expect students to attend as many as 90 tutorials and visit with the school guidance counselors at least once a week is unrealistic, based on current staff availability, and perhaps unnecessary.